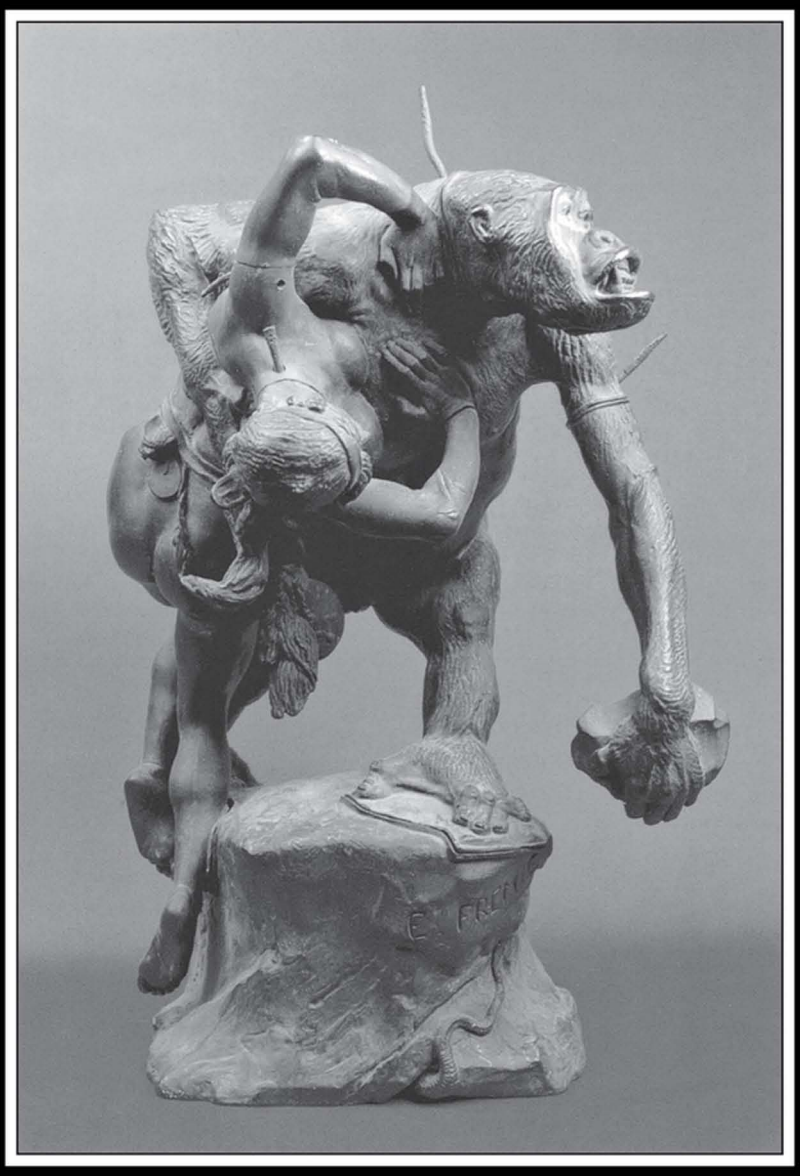
Fables of Modernity

Literature and Culture in the English Eighteenth Century



Laura Brown

CHAPTER 6

The Orangutang, the Lap Dog, and the Parrot: The Fable of the Nonhuman Being

In the fourth canto of Alexander Pope's *Rape of the Lock* (1717), Belinda, the poem's fashionable female protagonist, laments the loss of her "fav'rite Curl," snipped off by the Baron as they drink coffee after a game of Ombre. Belinda is incited to vengeance by her friend the "fierce *Thalestris*," who calls up a striking collection of beings in her evocation of the indignity that will result from the Baron's triumphant exhibit of his prize:

> Gods! shall the Ravisher display your Hair,
> While the Fops envy, and the Ladies stare!
> . . . . . .
> Sooner let Earth, Air, Sea to Chaos fall,
> Men, Monkies, Lap-Dogs, Parrots, perish all![1]

We can readily grasp the reductive assumptions of Belinda's world in the compact satiric sequence of this last line, in the incongruous alignment of "men" with the subsequent nonhuman beings—pets and exotic species—with which humankind is yoked. Countering the incongruity of these items is the alliteration that gives them a euphonic coherence. The consonants "m" and "p," respectively, hold together the first and second pairs—"Men" and "Monkies" on the one hand, and "Lap-Dogs" and "Parrots" on the other, and that "p" serves to attach the second pair to the

[1] Alexander Pope, *The Rape of the Lock*, in *Poems of Alexander Pope*, vol. 2, ed. Geoffrey Tillotson (London: Methuen, 1940), 4.148, 103–104, 119–120. Subsequent references are to this edition; line numbers are given within the text.

William Hogarth, *Guglielmus Hogarth* (1749). Self-portrait with his pug, Trump. By permission of the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library.

"perish" of the line's apocalyptic conclusion, so that the series has a close-knit verbal continuity that stands in striking and deflationary contrast to the satiric discontinuity of its association of incomparable beings. Unlike Belinda, the reader confidently distinguishes men from monkeys, lap dogs, or parrots, whose perishing must be weighed in a different scale from that of humankind.

Or must it? This line expresses the failure of Belinda's society to grasp the distinctions that confer meaning and seriousness upon human endeavor. But it also deliberately condenses a prominent contemporary problematic that calls those very distinctions into question. "Monkies, Lap-Dogs, [and] Parrots" make up a striking nonhuman cohort, regularly linked in the contemporary imagination: the *Spectator* (1712), in an almost identical phrase, attacks the frivolity of the upper-class female by describing her affection for "Parrots, monkeys and Lap Dogs."[2] And, as Pope's poem shows us, this familiar group of animals occupies a complex position in relation to "Men." Together, this cohort of beings is the center of an anxious, heated, even virulent debate on the topic of alterity, a debate in which the idea of "Men" is systematically problematized by its juxtaposition with a different category of being, and through which, consequently, one dimension of the European encounter with the non-European is imaginatively absorbed and debated. "Monkies, Lap-Dogs, [and] Parrots" are the collective protagonist of a cultural fable that explores the nature of being in relation to humanity. This exploration entails a sustained intimacy with alterity, an intimacy that provides a counterpoint to the repudiation of difference that we observed in the representation of the native prince in chapter 5.[3] In this respect, these two cultural fables—that of the native prince and that of the nonhuman being—might be seen as paired poles of an early and formative modern reflection upon cultural encounter.[4]

[2] Joseph Addison, *Spectator*, no. 343 (3 April 1712), ed. Donald F. Bond (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 3:273. Subsequent references are to this edition; volume and page numbers are given within the text.

[3] Srinivas Aravamudan also develops an argument that evokes both the native prince and the pet in an account of the colonialist approach to alterity. But his view connects these figures where I would hold them apart; he argues that in the character of Oroonoko the images of "pet" and African slave collaborate in a joint fantasy of subordination: "the royal slave as pet." See *Tropicopolitans: Colonialism and Agency, 1688–1804* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999), 33–49; this quote, 49.

[4] I have profited in this chapter from recent unpublished work on "Romantic Anti-Anthropomorphisms" by Adela Pinch, whose reading of the intimacy of human and animal focuses on Romantic poetry.

I

Animals intruded upon European consciousness in distinctive and novel ways in the course of the eighteenth century. To use Harriet Ritvo's words, "a fundamental shift in the relationship between humans and their fellow creatures" has been located in this period by various historians from various perspectives.[5] This shift was highly visible and broadly evident in the daily lives of individuals from the countryside to the city, and from the middling to the upper classes. In rural areas, the major innovations in agricultural practices that marked this period of transformation were accompanied by widespread experimentation in animal husbandry, including stock breeding and the development of breed specialization in horses, cattle, and sheep, with the concomitant rise of influential national and local agricultural societies (Ritvo, *Animal Estate*, 47–48). Ritvo suggests that such innovations, in which "people systematically appropriated power they had previously attributed to animals, and animals became significant primarily as the objects of human manipulation," reflected and institutionalized assumptions of domination and hierarchy comparable, later in the nineteenth century, to larger rhetorics of power and authority (*Animal Estate*, 2–3, 5–6). But these changes augmented and dovetailed with various other new practices—in biology, anatomy, and pet breeding—that suggest that this widespread transition in the perception of the relationship of animals and humans also involved substantial confusion and ambiguity.

In the life sciences, new paradigms in biology, zoology, and natural history raised controversial questions about the nature of the physiological and developmental links among animals, or between animals and men. In these contexts, the theologically sanctioned distinctiveness of man, as a being created by God in his own image and thus separated absolutely from the beasts, was challenged by an increasingly persuasive and prominent strain of thought that discovered various forms of proximity, connection, or intersection between animals and humans.[6] One central constituent of these scientific developments was the invention of modern biological classification, a consequence of the empiricist projects of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century science. This period saw the creation of several rival taxonomic systems—by Ray, Buffon, and Linnaeus—which "reflected a new human assertiveness with regard to the natural world" (Ritvo, *Animal*

[5] Harriet Ritvo, *The Animal Estate: The English and Other Creatures in the Victorian Age* (Harvard: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 2.

[6] My account of the relation between animals and humans is indebted throughout to Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: A History of the Modern Sensibility* (New York: Pantheon, 1983).

Estate, 13), but which simultaneously raised fundamental questions about the status of the human itself.

Many of these questions found a focal point in the eighteenth-century debate about the status of monkeys and apes, members of the Primate Order who were not systematically distinguished from one another until the nineteenth century.[7] According to Keith Thomas, the discovery of the great apes held major implications for European definitions of humanity (129). But this "discovery" was in part a matter of cultural readiness. H. W. Janson observes that reports of anthropoid apes "were received with almost complete equanimity" before the eighteenth century. Marco Polo brought back descriptions of orangutangs from South Asia, and several other early sources enabled sixteenth-century zoologists to form an image of the great ape. But, as Janson says, "despite their ever widening horizon of factual information [zoologists of the earlier period] continued to deal with their material in a frame of mind akin to that of the philologist, emphasizing problems of nomenclature and the authority of the written word rather than comparative anatomy and physiology."[8] The exploration of the relationship between apes and humans was first taken up by the early anatomists of the mid-seventeenth century, who were much more attentive to the problems posed by the great apes, problems which they pursued through an analysis of the structural differences and similarities between apes and humans.

The first major moment in the shift of the understanding of the anthropoid ape came in 1641 with the publication in Amsterdam of Nicolaas Tulp's *Observationum medicarum libri tres*, which included a representation of "Homo Sylvestris—Orang-outang," a picture of the body of the first anthropoid ape known to have reached Europe.[9] Dr. Tulp's rendering was followed by Edward Tyson's *Orang-Outang, sive Homo Sylvestris: or, the Anatomy of a Pygmie* (1699), which Janson describes as "the formal entry of the anthropoid ape into the consciousness of Western civilisation" (336). Tyson, a Fellow of the Royal Society and the age's preeminent figure in the fast developing science of comparative anatomy, performed a dissection of a juvenile chimpanzee—at this time typically designated as an orangutang—which he compared in full physiological detail with a man. Tyson's work was the first to document the connection between human and animal through the link of the anthropoid ape, and

[7] For a sketch of the early naturalists' treatment of the anthropoid ape, see Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), chap. 3.

[8] H. W. Janson, *Apes and Ape Lore in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (London: The Warburg Institute, 1952), 327, 334–335.

[9] On this event, see Janson, 334.

his treatise served as the grounding statement in a century-long physiological, biological, and philosophical discussion of the relation between apes and humans.

In the context of his anatomical comparison, Tyson maintained that the orangutang, "coming nearest to Mankind; seems the Nexus of the Animal and Rational," and he ended his anatomy with an essay on the "*Pygmies*, the *Cynocephali*, the *Satyrs*, and *Sphinges* of the Ancients," arguing that the close resemblance of orangutangs and men demonstrated by his dissection explains the mythical animals of ancient reports, which must have been actual creatures rather than fantasy—apes so man-like that they were readily mistaken for men.[10] Janson describes the influence of Tyson's work:

> the impact of the *Orang-Outang* could be felt almost immediately; it not only attracted wide attention among natural scientists but stirred the imagination of poets and philosophers, arousing them to flights of speculation about the nature of this novel creature, which they viewed as more human than simian. Tyson himself, while emphasizing its extraordinary resemblance to man, had clearly treated the *orang-outang* as an animal, but the very fact that he called it a *Homo Sylvestris* and a *Pygmie* suggested to the non-technical reader that it was essentially human. (336)

The terms and examples of Tyson's study informed the contemplations of the connection between apes and humans that extended throughout the century. An essay in the *Lay-Monk* from 1713, for example, argues that apes are as much like humans as are Hottentots. This text extrapolates from the physiological similarities evident in Tyson's dissection to other resemblances—including the potential for language, the comparability of intellect, and ultimately even the possession of a "feeling heart":

> The most perfect of this Order of Beings, the *Orang Outang*, as he is call'd by the Natives of *Angola*, that is, the Wild Man, or Man of the Woods, has the Honour of bearing the nearest Resemblance to Human Nature, tho' all that Species have some Agreement with us in our Features, . . . yet this has the greatest Likeness, not only in his Countenance, but in the Structure of his Body, his Ability to

[10] Edward Tyson, *Orang-Outang, sive Homo Sylvestris: or, the Anatomy of a Pygmie* (1699), facsimile ed., introd. Ashley Montagu (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1966), "Epistle Dedicatory." In the introduction to this edition, Ashley Montagu points out that Tyson's work "had a powerful influence upon all subsequent thought on man's place in nature" reaching to Darwin's *Descent of Man* (2). Subsequent references to Tyson's treatise are to this edition; page numbers are given within the text.

> walk upright, as well as on all fours; his Organs of Speech, his ready Apprehension, and his gentle and tender Passions, which are not found in any of the Ape Kind, and in various other Respects.[11]

The notion that Africa was populated by herds of these "men of the woods," who lacked only civilization to attain all the defining characteristics of the human, was widely available and frequently debated in the course of the eighteenth century. Though some writers—notably Buffon—argued for an absolute distinction between humans and beasts, there was a growing tendency to blur that boundary, or to shift its location on the new hierarchies of zoological classification, and, relatedly, to accord human status to the ape. Contemporary discussions of the role of civilization and the nature of language lent strength to this tendency. Rousseau's influential definition of the state of nature, and especially his inclusion of language as an effect of civilization, accorded well with such accounts of the "men of the woods." And the Scottish philosopher James Burnet, Lord Monboddo, argued at length in *Of the Origin and Progress of Language* (1774) that the orangutangs of Angola were primitive men who had not yet developed language.

The intersection of human and animal was felt widely and variously in the intellectual movements of the eighteenth century. Influential social ideas about progress and improvement—extensions of philosophical optimism—drew concrete credibility from the suggestion that animals might be able to better themselves: that apes could learn to speak, and other animals could attain parallel advantages. Discussions of the Platonistic "chain of being" also accommodated and supported the proximity of man and beast. The principle of continuity—which saw differences in the hierarchy of beings that populated the chain as minute gradations rather than clear distinctions—found an apt match with contemporary speculation about the status of animals. Bolingbroke, for instance, saw "many degrees of comparison between the human intelligence and that of various animals. . . . [such that] intellectual faculties and corporeal senses, of the same and of different kinds, [seem to be] communicated in some proportion or other to the whole race of animals."[12] And Soame Jenyns in this context argued for a kind of "blending" or "shading":

[11] Richard Blackmore and John Hughes, *The Lay-Monk* (25 November 1713). Cited in Maximillian E. Novak, "The Wild Man Comes to Tea," in *The Wild Man Within: An Image in Western Thought from the Renaissance to Romanticism*, ed. Robert Dudley and Novak (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1972), 190. On this material, see A. O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), 234–235.

[12] Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, *Fragments, or Minutes of Essays* in *Works* (1809), 8:168–169; cited in Lovejoy, 196 n. 29.

> The various qualitites with which these various beings are endued, we perceive without difficulty, but the boundaries of those qualities which form this chain of subordination, are so mixed, that where one ends, and the next begins, we are unable to discover. . . . The manner by which the consummate wisdom of the divine artificer has formed this gradation, so extensive in the whole, and so imperceptible in the parts, is this:—He constantly unites the highest degree of the qualities of each inferior order to the lowest degree of the same qualities belonging to the order next above it; by which means, like the colours of a skilful painter, they are so blended together, and shaded off into each other, that no line of distinction is anywhere to be seen.[13]

A. O. Lovejoy finds it "curious" that this implication of the great chain of being was so "tardily drawn" in the course of the long history of the idea: that the "blending" of human and animal only arose as an explicit consideration in the early eighteenth century, even though that idea was a relevant corollary to the chain of being from classical times. Lovejoy observes that "blending"—the sense of the "consanguinity of man and the animals next to him in the scale"—once it arises in the eighteenth century, anticipates the general establishment—in the nineteenth century—of theories of biological evolutionism or the transformation of species. This anticipation is evidence, for Lovejoy, of the almost self-contained and self-perpetuating influence of intellectual history on contemporary thought (195–198). But the broader cultural context that we have observed suggests that Lovejoy is registering a precedent—within the intellectual history of the chain of being—for the "shading" of human and animal that is widely evident elsewhere in the cultural history of the period, a "shading" that represents the powerful contemporary imaginative engagement with the alterity of the animal kingdom, and which extends through various strata of contemporary popular and intellectual experience. The idea of "blending," like the issue of the relevance of the great apes, became available in intellectual discourse at the same time that the modern encounter with alterity gained cultural prominence.

The interest in the "consanguinity" of human and beast was supported by the contemporary discoveries of "wild boys"—much publicized specimens of humans purportedly raised by beasts or reverted to a bestial state—who served as living evidence of the role of civilization and the characteristics of the state of nature. The story of Pedro Serrano, taken up

[13] Soame Jenyns, "On the Chain of Universal Being," in *Disquisitions on Several Subjects* in *Works* (1790), 1:179–185; cited in Lovejoy, 197 n.33.

from Garcilaso de la Vega's accounts of the new world, told of a European who had reverted to a wild state and consequently grown a coat of hair.[14] Bern Connor, in a contemporary history of Poland, describes various men raised in the wild, one of whom when tamed had no recollection of his wild state.[15] But, as Maximillian Novak has shown, Peter, the "wild boy," was the figure most vividly present to and influential upon the contemporary English imagination. Peter was brought from Germany to London in 1726 where he was the subject of experiment, baptism, and debate: "his arrival produced a number of pamphlets, a sermon, a book-length satire by Daniel Defoe, and at least one poem" (185).

The instability of the boundary between the human and the nonhuman being pervaded the everyday experience of the metropolitan residents of Europe in the long eighteenth century. Popular urban audiences were the recipients and witnesses of myriad anecdotes and spectacles that supported these notions about animals.[16] Samuel Pepys observed an ape—probably either a chimpanzee or a gorilla—that seemed to him "so much like a man in most things, that . . . I cannot believe but that it is a monster got of a man and a she-baboone. I do believe it already understands much english: and I am of the mind it might be tought to speak or make signs."[17] Indeed, an orangutang, owned by Sir Ashton Lever, was widely believed to have been taught a few words.[18]

During this century and the next, as Richard Altick has shown, Londoners were entertained by a host of shows featuring animals displayed to produce a connection with the human. One account from the early part of the century describes a

> Man Teger, lately brought from the *East Indies*, a most strange and wonderful Creature, the like never seen before in *England*, it being of Seven several Colours, from the Head downwards resembling a Man, its fore parts clear, and his hinder parts all Hairy; having a long Head of Hair, and Teeth 2 or 3 Inches long; taking a Glass of

[14] I am indebted to Novak's description of "wild boys" for this account. For Serrano's story, see Novak, 188.

[15] Bern Connor, *The History of Poland* (London, 1698), 1: 342–343; cited in Novak, 190.

[16] I am indebted in this section to Richard D. Altick's essential compilation of accounts of animals on display in London in *The Shows of London* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), chap. 3.

[17] *The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 2.160 (22–24 August 1661).

[18] James Burnett, Lord Monboddo, *Antient Metaphysics*, vol. 3 (London, 1784; reprint, New York: Garland, 1977), 40.

> Ale in his hand like a Christian, Drinks it, also plays at Quarter Staff.[19]

Altick surmises that the "man teger" was a West African baboon (38 n. 18). Another show "at the White Horse Inn in Fleet Street, any time of the Day or Evening," featured a "little Black Hairy Pigmey [probably a monkey], bred in the Desarts of Arabia, [with] a Natural Ruff of Hair about his Face, two Foot high, walks upright, drinks a Glass of Ale or Wine, and does several other things to admiration" (Ashton, 1:269–270). Yet another "Noble Creature which much resembles a Wild *Hairy Man*" performed rope dances at Epsom and Bath as well as London (Ashton, 1:274). The *Spectator* prints a description of this being that emphasizes his "blending" with the human: "He is by birth a Monkey; but swings upon a Rope, takes a pipe of Tobacco, and drinks a glass of Ale, like any reasonable Creature" (no. 28, 1:119). Another "monster" from "Mount Tibet" was said to "approach the Human Species nearer than any hitherto exhibited, and is supposed to be the long lost link between the Human and Brute Creation." This creature possessed "great beauty and sagacity," as well as "affability, friendship and good nature."[20] Especially appealing to the ladies was a female ape known widely as "Madame Chimpanzee" and displayed in London in 1738. She was said to be modest, affectionate, and distinguished by her table manners. According to Thomas Boreman she:

> was very pretty Company at the Tea-table, behav'd with Modesty and good Manners, and give great Satisfaction to the Ladies who were pleased to honour her with their Visits, . . . it would fetch its Chair, and sit in it naturally, like a Human Creature, whilst it drank Tea: It would take the Dish in its Hand, and if the Liquor was two hot, wou'd pour the Tea into the Saucer to cool it.[21]

Apes were displayed in this way through the nineteenth century, and that later period affords many vivid examples of this phenomenon. According to Ritvo, they were

> invariably . . . exhibited in ways that emphasized their likeness to people. They ate with table utensils, sipped tea from cups, and slept

[19] John Ashton, *Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1882), 1:271–272.

[20] Altick, 83, 83 n. 20; citing the *Morning Herald and Advertiser*, 1793.

[21] Thomas Boreman, *A Description of Some Curious and Uncommon Creatures* (London, 1739), 24; cited in Schiebinger, 101.

> under blankets. One orangutan displayed in London's Exeter Change Menagerie amused itself by carefully turning the pages of an illustrated book. At the Regent's Park Zoo a chimpanzee named Jenny regularly appeared in a flannel nightgown and robe. Apes often boasted Christian names, which heightened the suggestiveness of clothes, forks, and books. Tommy, a chimp who lived at the Regent's Park Zoo in 1835 and 1836, was pronounced by one admirer to be greatly superior in "shrewdness and sagacity . . . [to the] human infant, and . . . for that matter, many grown individuals." A chimpanzee acquired by the Earl Fitzwilliam in 1849 was reported to walk "perfectly erect" and handle "everything like a human being"; its food was "choice, and wine a favorite beverage." (*Animal Estate,* 31–33)

This movement of proximity to the human was not limited to apes or monkeys, however. "Learned" animals of other species displayed a human-like intelligence to avid eighteenth-century audiences. The "learned" horse was a familiar example; one horse shown at Exeter Change in 1760 and 1772 was so accomplished that, like the "man of the woods," it "only want[ed] speech."[22] The "learned pig" that appeared in London in 1785 was "well versed in all Languages, perfect Arethmatician & Composer of Musick";[23] "he reads, writes, and casts accounts by means of typographical cards, in the same manner that a printer composes and by the same method . . . sets down any capital or surname; solves questions in the four rules of Arithmetic," and even tells time.[24] So suggestive was this spectacle that one contemporary witness commented:

> I have . . . been for a long time accustomed to consider animals as mere machines, actuated by the unerring hand of Providence, to do those things which are necessary for the preservation of themselves and their offspring; but the sight of the Learned Pig, which has lately been shown in London, has deranged these ideas and I know not what to think.[25]

[22] Altick, 40, 40 n. 37; citing Clippings Enthoven Collection, Theatre Museum, London, Exeter Change file.

[23] Altick, 40, 40 n. 43; citing Robert Southey, *Letters from England,* ed. Jack Simmons (London: Cresset Press, 1951), 340.

[24] Altick, 40, 40 n. 44; citing Daniel Lysons, *Collectanea; or, A Collection of Advertisements from the Newspapers . . . [1661–1840],* 5 scrapbooks at the British Library, 1889.e.5., 2:86–90.

[25] Sarah Trimmer, *Fabulous Histories designed for the Instruction of Children* (3d ed., 1788), 71; cited in Thomas, 92.

In this period, to "know not what to think" on the subject of animals was to open up the possibility that they could be compared with humans in "reason, intelligence, language and almost every other human quality" (Thomas, 129).

Other animals came into even more intimate connection with the human denizens of eighteenth-century England. This period saw the full flowering of a modern phenomenon "undoubtedly unique in human history," the keeping of pets. Aristocrats kept selected animals for display in the sixteenth century and earlier, and upper-class women in the eighteenth century, as we have already seen, were frequently satirized for their affection for monkeys, parrots, and lap dogs, as well as squirrels and ferrets. But the socially widespread assumption of household intimacy with a companion animal is an eighteenth-century invention. Thomas argues that pet keeping supplies the cultural context against which the modern tendency "to break down the rigid boundaries between animals and men" can be understood (119, 122). The breeding of ornamental fish, especially goldfish, an aristocratic pastime in the early part of the period, became widespread in the course of the eighteenth century. And the keeping and breeding of cage birds—especially canaries and pigeons—came to be a popular obsession. J. H. Plumb summarizes the development of bird-keeping in the period:

> Canaries had been on sale in London from the sixteenth century, but the growth in the trade was not very rapid until after 1700. In the early eighteenth century families were encouraged to buy nesting boxes to try and breed their own outstanding songsters. The variety of birds for sale constantly expanded, and novelties were eagerly sought. Parrots and cockatoos, the pets of the aristocracy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, now adorned the parlours of shopkeepers and artisans. So popular were unusual birds that the owners of pleasure gardens around London and the provincial towns set up aviaries in order to attract customers.

Plumb cites, for example, a contemporary advertisement for "Choice Parakeets, Talking Parrots, the finest Cockatoo that was ever seen in England, choice Canary Birds . . ."[26]

[26] J. H. Plumb, "The Acceptance of Modernity," in *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England,* ed. Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, and Plumb (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 321–322. On the history and spread of parrot keeping, see also Edward J. Boosey, *Parrots, Cockatoos and Macaws* (Silver Springs, Md.: Denlinger's, 1956), chap. 1.

But most evident, even ubiquitous, in the eighteenth century was the canine house pet. The foundations for the canine obsession were laid before this period: toy spaniels were kept by upper class women in the sixteenth century, and pugs in the seventeenth. But it was in the eighteenth century that the canine house pet rose to the status of companion and acquired general recognition for intelligence, affection, and loyalty. Thomas shows that

> by 1700 all the symptoms of obsessive pet-keeping were in evidence. Pets were often fed better than the servants. They were adorned with rings, ribbons, feathers and bells; and they became an increasingly regular feature of painted family groups, usually as a symbol of fidelity, domesticity and completeness, though sometimes (as in the case of dogs) as an emblem of mischievous irreverence. (117)

For instance, in the self-portrait *Guglielmus Hogarth* (1740) designed to serve as the frontispiece to his complete prints, William Hogarth included a pug, whose face seems to be studied as closely as his own. This dog is probably "Trump," Hogarth's companion animal and a successor of the earlier "Pugg," kept by Hogarth in the 1730s and appearing in several of the conversation paintings of that decade. Pugg and Trump were artistic signatures for Hogarth, often interpreted iconographically as a sign of the artist's independence, pugnaciousness, or doggedness. But the cultural context of pet keeping suggests that they were also something more, figures of a complex and significant connection between the human and the nonhuman that iconography cannot fully explicate.[27]

As modern historians have shown, pet keeping is a hallmark of modernity, a bourgeois phenomenon sponsored by the middle class and linked at once to urbanization, commercialization, and alienation—"a development of genuine social, psychological, and indeed commercial importance" (Thomas, 119). Kathleen Kete in her study of nineteenth-century Parisian pet keeping, suggests that animals occupy the place of feeling and meaning for the modern bourgeoisie.[28] And Thomas shows that pets came to constitute a lucrative new source of speculation and profit in this

[27] See Ronald Paulson, *Hogarth*, vol. 2: *High Art and Low 1732–1750* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1992), 260–264, and vol. 1: *The 'Modern Moral Subject' 1697–1732* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 222–224. On the repeated appearance of the pug, Paulson "wonders why, so early in his career, Hogarth insists on including . . . an aspect of himself . . . in so many pictures" (1: 223).

[28] Kathleen Kete, *The Beast in the Boudoir: Petkeeping in Nineteenth-Century Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

period, leading directly to the institutionalization of dog fancy in the formation of the dog show and the Kennel Club in the nineteenth century (107). But the obsession with pets also contributed, like the display of the "learned pig" or the discovery of the "man of the woods," to a problematization of the distinctiveness of the human. According to Thomas, pet keeping "encouraged the middle classes to form optimistic conclusions about animal intelligence; it gave rise to innumerable anecdotes about animal sagacity; it stimulated the notion that animals could have character and individual personality; and it created the psychological foundation for the view that some animals at least were entitled to moral consideration" (119). Thomas sees in the phenomenon of pet keeping an epistemological confusion and a moral contradiction typical of the paradox of modernity, in which an unprecedented proximity to the animal kingdom on the part of humankind was ironically matched by an equally unprecedented "ruthless exploitation of other forms of animate life," an exploitation upon which the very "material foundations of human society" depended (302).

The fable of monkeys, parrots, and lap dogs represents the imaginative redaction of this complex contemporary encounter with the nonhuman. Its protagonist is a specific nonhuman being, one of a cohort marked in the contemporary imagination for its approach to the human: a monkey, a cage bird, or a canine pet, as Pope's couplet compactly indicates. This proximity to the human is the center of a systematic, sustained inquiry or negotiation. Unlike the native prince, the protagonist of this fable is not recuperated as a European ideal; the fable of the nonhuman being depicts a creature whose vivid and physical difference from his European and human author and audience is the central constituent of his story. The defining dynamic of this fable, then, is an imaginative approach to a radical alterity. Such an approach is specific to the eighteenth-century experience of difference, and distinguishes this cultural event from earlier representations of the relation between human and nonhuman beings.

In Shakespeare's *Tempest* (1611), for instance, Caliban's character blends human and beast in a manner the presages the central theme of the eighteenth-century fable, but with a different structure and focus. After the shipwreck, Trinculo encounters Caliban for the first time on the island, playing dead to avoid the pursuit of Prospero's spirits. At first glance, Trinculo mistakes him for a nonhuman being—a fish:

> What have we here, a man or a fish? Dead or alive?—A fish, he smells like a fish; a very ancient and fish-like smell; a kind of not-of-the-newest poor-john. A strange fish! Were I in England now, as

> once I was, and had but this fish painted, not a holiday-fool there but would give a piece of silver. There would this monster make a man. Any strange beast there makes a man. When they will not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian. Legged like a man, and his fins like arms! Warm, o'my troth! I do now let loose my opinion, hold it no longer. This is no fish, but an islander that hath lately suffered by a thunderbolt.[29]

Here the boundary between human and animal is represented from the perspective of the human rather than the animal: Caliban is the vehicle of a comparison in which the fish is the tenor, and he quickly regains his full humanity as an "islander." Trinculo abandons the figure of the nonhuman shortly after he generates it, with a decisive formulation—"this is no fish"—that asserts a distinction between human and animal with a confidence not to be found in the eighteenth-century fable. Shakespeare's image is a slippery and partial version of the fully contradictory figure that appears in eighteenth-century print culture.

But this passage makes explicit the analogy that becomes pervasive in later versions of the fable: that of the nonhuman and the non-European human being. Caliban's brief blending with the fish directly evokes the contemporary display of non-European bodies—"dead or alive"—in contexts that identified them with "monsters" brought back from the voyages of discovery, "beasts" belonging to those regions beyond European civilization that in the Elizabethan period had begun to represent the allure of a world newly opened to European exploitation. In her account of the development of early modern taxonomy, Ritvo describes precisely this cultural mode:

> The taxonomic relationship between Europeans and other human populations was mapped concretely as well as in words. Exhibitions inevitably emphasized the gap between observer and observed. Museums frequently displayed the remains of non-European human beings in ways that underlined their difference from Europeans or that suggested their greater affinity with other animals. Thus in 1766 a travelling [sic] collection of "curiosities" grouped a "Negro Child" with a "Monstrous Cat with 8 legs," a "Chicken's Foot with 6 Toes," a sloth, and an armadillo.[30]

[29] William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, 2.2.23–34, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt et al. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997). Subsequent references are to this edition; act, scene, and line number are given within the text.

[30] Ritvo, *The Platypus and the Mermaid and Other Figments of the Classifying Imagination* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 125.

No fishes in this list, though the "mermaid" was a famous object of such attention in London exhibitions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries,[31] and Locke himself cited "what is confidently reported of mermaids or sea-men" as an example of nature's infinite variety.[32] The eighteenth-century fable of the nonhuman being, as we shall see, extends this cultural engagement with non-European human beings in a way that gives the contradictions and exploitations of our fable a particular historical significance.

II

As we have seen, apes staged the question of the relation between human and animal most directly in eighteenth-century experience, and most explicitly in the print culture of the period. Prominent in the discursive representation of the ape was the trope of interspecies miscegenation, in which the male ape, usually the orangutang, is said to carry off the female African, often described as a "Hottentot," in order to enjoy her in his "woody retreat." This anecdote, emerging from a motif initially located in seventeenth-century travel literature, becomes established in eighteenth-century prose narrative and provides us with a powerful and provocative example of the fable of the nonhuman being.

H. W. Janson shows that what he calls the "rape-ape" theme is a new motif in the early modern period, with no significant classical or medieval versions.[33] He finds traces of this motif in a few sixteenth-century graphic representations of lascivious male apes but locates its first literary appearance in John Donne's *Progresse of the Soule* (1601). Donne's poem is a complex rendering of metempsychosis, gathering and negotiating various biblical, Cabalistic, and humanist strains of thought in order to represent the migration of the"deathlesse soule."[34] In the course of its incarnations, the

[31] Ritvo, *Platypus,* 180. See also Altick, 302–303.

[32] John Locke, *An Essay concerning Human Understanding,* ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), bk. 3, chap. 6, §12. See also Lovejoy, who notes in this context that the belief in mermen "supported as it seemed to be both by the principle of plenitude and the supposed testimony of many witnesses, could claim a certain respectability down to the late eighteenth century" from the first major natural history, Gesner's *Historia animalium* (1551–1587) (368). Subsequent references to Locke's *Essay* are to this edition; book, chapter, and paragraph numbers are given within the text.

[33] This account of the sources of the "rape-ape" theme is indebted to Janson's important work; see chap. 9. Winthrop D. Jordan also canvasses this theme, relying in part on Janson. See *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550–1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 28–32, 228–234.

[34] John Donne, *The Progresse of the Soule* in *Metempsychosis,* in *The Complete Poetry of John Donne,* ed. John T. Shawcross (New York: New York University Press, 1968), line 1. Subsequent references are to this edition; line numbers are given within the text.

soul enters the body of an ape and in that form falls in love with Siphatecia, the fifth daughter of Adam. Donne's poem raises the question of the ape's relation to the human in a way that prefigures the eighteenth-century debate:

> His organs now so like theirs [humans] hee doth finde,
> That why he cannot laugh, and speake his minde,
> He wonders.
>
> (ll. 454–456)

Janson speculates that this "startlingly 'modern' thought"—that imagines apes as humans without speech—could be Donne's anticipation of the major themes of the eighteenth century debate, through early information about the great apes that he might have obtained from travel writings before the first anatomical evaluations of actual apes. Donne's poem foreshadows the eighteenth-century negotiation of the relation between human and nonhuman, but its Cabalistic concerns and its formal rendering of the love affair distance it from the eighteenth-century anecdote. Donne's ape courts Siphatecia, gazing on her, wooing her, making her merry, and finally, "up lifts subtly with his russet pawe / Her kidskinne apron without feare or awe / Of nature" (ll. 478–480). And she responds in a like manner:

> First she was silly'and knew not what he ment.
> That vertue, by his touches, chaft and spent,
> Succeeds an itchie warmth, that melts her quite;
> She knew not first, nowe cares not what he doth,
> And willing halfe and more, more than halfe loth,
> She neither puls nor pushes, but outright
> Now cries, and now repents.
>
> (ll. 481–487)

Their congress is interrupted by her brother, who throws a "great stone . . . After the Ape, who, thus prevented, flew" (ll. 488–490). The subtlety, the reciprocity, and the gradual approach of human and nonhuman in Donne's story are replaced, in the eighteenth-century fable, with a symptomatic suddenness, haste, and violence.

Janson finds the most influential versions of the story in seventeenth-century travel narrative: "Presented as a true experience in some remote corner of the world, the story gained a new flavour of authenticity, until it was eventually accepted as one of the established facts of natural history" (275). He locates the "archetype" of this theme in a tale in Francesco Maria Guazzo's *Compendium Maleficarum* (Milan, 1608), which we shall

see recounted by Tyson below. And he describes several subsequent versions of the story in the French tradition to which he traces the scene of the ape lovers in Voltaire's *Candide* (1759) (275–276). In eighteenth-century England, the sexual encounter of ape and human is a staple trope in the fable of the nonhuman being, offering a fertile instance in which a radical alterity is countered by a sudden intimacy, a formal dynamic that is emphasized and developed in the many contemporary redactions of this anecdote.[35]

The most influential version of the miscegenation anecdote was that recited by Edward Tyson in the *Anatomy of a Pygmie* (1699). At the point in the anatomy of his examination of the chimpanzee's reproductive organs, Tyson evokes the "infinite Stories" of these animals, which are very "salacious":

> That the whole *Ape*-kind is extreamly given to *Venery*, appears by infinite Stories related of them. And not only so, but different from other *Brutes*, they covet not their *own Species*, but to an Excess are inclined and sollicitous to those of a *different*, and are more *amorous* of fair *Women*. Besides what I have already mentioned, *Gabriel Clauderus* tells us of an *Ape*, which grew so amorous of one of the *Maids* of *Honour*, who was a celebrated Beauty, that no Chains, nor Confinement, nor Beating, could keep him within Bounds; so that the *Lady* was forced to petition to have him banished the Court. But that Story of *Castanenda* in his *Annals of Portugal* (if true) is very remarkable; of a Woman who had two Children by an *Ape*. I shall give it in *Latin*, as 'tis related by *Licetus*; and 'tis quoted too by *Anton. Deusingius* and others.

The Latin text describes the story, reproduced from the *Compendium Maleficarum*, of the abduction of a woman, left on a desert island, by an ape, the leader of a tribe of such nonhuman beings, who keeps her as a wife and to whom she bears two children. Rescued from the ape, the

[35] In addition to the texts by Tyson, Long, and Swift cited below, other references to the story are to be found in George Louis Leclerc Buffon, *Buffon's Natural History* (London, 1797), 9: 289–290; Thomas Herbert, *A Relation of Some Yeares Travaile . . . Into Afrique and the Greater Asia* (London, 1634), 17–20 (cited in Jordan, 31 n. 64); Thomas Phillips, *A Journal of a Voyage Made . . . from England to Cape Monseradoe, in Africa*, in John and Awsham Churchill, comps., *A Collection of Voyages and Travels* (London, 1704–32), 4: 211 (cited in Jordan, 31 n. 64); William Smith, *A New Voyage to Guinea* . . . (London, 1744), 52 (cited in Jordan, 31 n. 64); Lionel Wafer, *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America* (1699), ed. George Parker Winship (New York: Burt Franklin, 1970), 113 n; Charles White, *An Account of the Regular Gradation in Man* (London, 1799), 34 (cited in Harriet Ritvo, "Barring the Cross: Miscegenation and Purity in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain," in *Human, All Too Human*, ed. Diana Fuss [New York: Routledge, 1996], 37–58, 43).

woman is taken away by ship, and the ape throws the children, and then himself, into the sea (43).[36] Tyson's representations of the anecdote of miscegenation, like almost all subsequent ones, claim to recite an earlier testimony. As this story is retold in the eighteenth century, its form comes to dwell on the sudden and violent—the beating of the ape-courtier and the death of the hybrid infants—but to counterpose those effects with a sense of the inevitability or even the anatomical necessity of this connection, so that the anecdote represents a leap of affinity, in which a posited alterity is reversed by a surprising connection. This leap is the hallmark of the fable of the nonhuman being.

In the case of the miscegenation anecdote, this leap can generate an anxious reaction that is used to separate, not the ape from the human—the core of the experience of the fable of the nonhuman being—but the non-European human from the European human. Thus Edward Long in his *History of Jamaica* (1774) concludes from his recitation of the miscegenation story that the mixing of apes and Hottentots proves the African to be of a different species from the European:

> it is also averred, that [orangutangs] sometimes endeavour to surprize and carry off Negroe women into their woody retreats, in order to enjoy them. . . that they conceive a Passion for the Negroe women, and hence must be supposed to covet their embraces from a natural impulse of desire, such as inclines one animal towards another of the same species, or which has a conformity in the organs of generation. . . [this is proof that] the oran-outang and some races of black men are very nearly allied.[37]

This passage, in a form typical of the miscegenation story, imagines the encounter with radical alterity as both a "surprize" and a "natural impulse," and it structures the anecdote around those contrasting poles. In this version of the story, though, an "alliance" is emphasized between the orangutang and "some races of black men," an alliance that implies a division between the non-European and the European, and results in an assertion of European identity that is meant to enforce that division among the readers of this text. Arguments, like Long's, claiming the inferiority of certain non-European human beings to Europeans or "whites," arose in

[36] This tale extends the story of interspecies miscegenation into the trope of separation, which is taken up later in various imaginary accounts of cultural contact, notably, for instance, that of Yarico and Inkle. In fact, the representation of interspecies miscegenation is one of the most direct rhetorical contexts for the Yarico and Inkle story, prefiguring the scene of courtship in the cave and the shipboard separation, as well as the murder of the child.

[37] Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica* . . . (London, 1774), 1:360, 364, 370.

the latter part of the eighteenth century in support of a newly popular theory of polygenism. This notion of biologically separate human species countered the more orthodox monogenism that maintained both the distinction between human and nonhuman beings, and the assumption of human superiority and uniqueness. The "blending" of human and nonhuman challenged these assumptions of human superiority in a way that destabilized contemporary thinking about alterity—among humans and between humans and animals.[38]

The complex and reciprocal relationship between the attack on human superiority and the development of racialist thinking finds a canonical expression in the most widely read version of the miscegenation story, the bathing scene in the fourth voyage of Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726). In the Yahoos of the fourth voyage, Swift combined the traits of both apes and Africans, in the latter case the "Hottentots," commonly thought to be the most primitive race of humans.[39] In this scene, the female Yahoo's sexual interest in Gulliver proves his connection with the Yahoos:

> Being one day abroad with my protector the sorrel nag, and the weather exceeding hot, I entreated him to let me bathe in a river that was near. He consented, and I immediately stripped myself stark naked, and went down softly into the stream. It happened that a young female yahoo, standing behind a bank, saw the whole proceeding, and inflamed by desire . . . came running with all speed, and leaped into the water within five yards of the place

[38] Anthony J. Barker has shown Long's extensive debt to Samuel Estwick's idea of racial gradation, in which Negroes are seen as a different species from Europeans, taken from the second edition of Estwick's *Considerations on the Negro Cause* (1772). See Barker, *The African Link: British Attitudes to the Negro in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1550–1807* (London: Frank Cass, 1978), 47–48. Roxann Wheeler provides a reading of Long's *History* that indicates the complexity of its construction of a racialist hierarchy, a construction that nevertheless moves toward the development of hierarchy based on physical differences. Wheeler's study of race places Long at a pivotal point in the development of a modern, essentialist idea of racism, which she sees as arising gradually out of the "general lack of coherence of discourses of human difference" that characterize the earlier eighteenth century. *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 232. And Ritvo has highlighted the overdetermined significance of hybrid creatures and animal miscegenation in this century and the next, showing that "discussions of animal miscegenation inevitably connected general zoological matters with more narrowly human concerns. . . . In a period of global empire . . . the zoological . . . discussion of these matters . . . may have derived much of its structure, as well as its heated tone, from its easy compromise of the taxonomic barrier that ostensibly separated animals from people" ("Barring the Cross," 52).

[39] On the Yahoos' relation to apes, see Janson, 339; on their relation to Hottentots, see Laura Brown, *Ends of Empire: Women and Ideology in Early Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), chap. 6.

> where I bathed. I was never in my life so terribly frighted . . . She embraced me after a most fulsome manner; I roared as loud as I could and the nag came galloping towards me, whereupon she quitted her grasp, with the utmost reluctancy, and leaped upon the opposite bank, where she stood gazing and howling all the time I was putting on my clothes. . . . now I could no longer deny that I was a real yahoo in every limb and feature, since the females had a natural propensity to me as one of their own species.[40]

This passage stages the approach to alterity in the same form that we have detailed in the other appearances of the anecdote. In fact, it elaborates and emphasizes those distinctive formal traits. Expressions of suddenness, haste, and loud alarm—"running," "leaping," "roaring," "galloping," and "howling"—disrupt a contrastingly quiet and peaceful moment in the text as Gulliver goes "down softly into the stream." That abrupt and rapid movement is matched with a subsequent assertion of inevitability, the familiar allusion to a "natural propensity" towards "one of their own species." The leap of affinity here is marked by a statement of identification—"I could no longer deny that I was a real yahoo"—which makes explicit the movement of proximity that provides the underlying dynamic of the fable of the nonhuman being, and at the same time asserts a specific human identity.

The question of course in the fourth voyage of *Gulliver's Travels* is whether the Yahoo is a human or a nonhuman being, precisely the problematic that underlies contemporary thinking both about the human and about cultural difference. Thus, in *Gulliver's Travels*, the dynamic of proximity typical of the fable of the nonhuman being doubles upon itself. This passage proliferates the leap of affinity, twisting the miscegenation anecdote in a way that highlights and deepens its encounter with alterity. As we have seen, the established pattern of the story of interspecies miscegenation represents a male ape setting upon a female African.[41] In this passage, however, the female Yahoo, herself both human and animal, taking the place of the male ape, attacks the male Gulliver, a European human standing in for the female African. This intersection of alterities complicates and opens up the implications of the fable of the nonhuman being. Male and female sexual roles are reversed in Swift's version of the anecdote, and as a consequence African and European identities are su-

[40] Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels and Other Writings*, ed. Louis A. Landa (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), 215.

[41] Aside from this passage in *Gulliver's Travels*, there are no known counterexamples. Schiebinger asserts that "in these accounts it is invariably the male ape who forced himself on the human female. To my knowledge there was not one account in this period of a female ape taking a man or even of intercourse between a female ape and a male human" (95). See also Jordan, 238.

perimposed, so that Gulliver occupies the position of both male and female, African and European at once.

Such a confluence of affinities brings the movement of proximity to bear upon the European reader himself in an assertion of identity that prevents that racialist separation of the non-European from the European that we have seen in Long's version of the story, as well as in the contemporary displays of non-Europeans alongside nonhuman new world curiosities. Neither Gulliver nor Swift's reader can stand clear of this story. It is specifically structured to implicate its audience, in the same way that *Gulliver's Travels* as a whole, and Swift's satire in general, works to implicate its reader, as the modern critical tradition of Swift has consistently contended. But in this case we can see how Swift's distinctive and notorious satiric form is structured by its particular manipulation of a well-developed contemporary cultural fable. The intersections in this passage also suggest an interdependency of affinities—male and female, African and European—such that the leap that produces a point of contact between the poles of one pair of opposing positions corresponds precisely with the leap that joins the other pair. In this sense, Swift's version of the miscegenation story serves to extend the relevance of the fable of the nonhuman being, linking its differences of species and culture with those of gender.[42]

In the next quarter of the century, in the course of his long pair of chapters in *Of the Origin and Progress of Language* designed to prove through the example of the orangutang that "language is natural to man,"[43] Lord Monboddo reminds his reader variously and repeatedly of

[42] The influence of the fable of the nonhuman being is even evident in an anecdote in Olaudah Equiano's *Narrative* (1789) describing Equiano's unexpected meeting with another "black boy" on the Isle of Wight. Here the distance is the effect of Equiano's partial deracination, which initially links him to the European side of the equation, but which is quickly superceded by brotherhood:

> I was one day in a field belonging to a gentleman who had a black boy about my own size; this boy having observed me from his master's house, was transported at the sight of one of his own countrymen, and ran to meet me with the utmost haste. I not knowing what he was about, turned a little out of his way at first, but to no purpose; he soon came close to me, and caught hold of me in his arms as if I had been his brother, though we had never seen each other before.

The peaceful field, the physical distance, the "transport," "haste," and speed, the difference as Equiano turns away, and the telltale embrace are all established aspects of our fable, which is here recruited to the purpose of representing the complexity of African diasporic identity. Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative and Other Writings*, ed. Vincent Carretta (New York: Penguin, 1995), 85.

[43] James Burnet, Lord Monboddo, *Of the Origin and Progress of Language*, 2d ed. (Edinburgh, 1774; reprint, New York: Garland, 1970), 1:360. Subsequent references are to this edition; page numbers are given within the text.

the miscegenation story. Early in his discussion he recalls those claims "that [the orangutang] is very fond of women, whom they always attack when they meet with them in the woods" (274–275). He specifically quotes a well-known traveler, "Mr de la Brosse," who "made a voyage to Angola in 1738 . . . [and found] that these Orang Outangs, whom he calls by the name of *Quimpezes* . . . . carry away young negroe girls, and keep them for their pleasure: And, he says, he knew one negroe girl that had been with them three years" (277–278). He cites the miscegenation story as an indication of the orangutang's character: "they shew also counsel and design, by carrying off creatures of our species, for certain purposes, and keeping them for years together, without doing them any harm; which no brute creature was ever known to do" (289–290). And he recalls other "certain" evidence "that [the orangutang] copulates with our females, and [there is] the greatest reason to believe, that there is offspring of such copulation" (334), because "Keoping, the Swedish traveller . . . relates, that he himself saw the offspring of a woman by an Orang Outang, which having in it all the vigour of the wild race, immediately, when it was born, began to run about, and to climb upon every thing" (334n).

Indeed, Monboddo's description of the orangutang can be seen as a proliferative expansion of the anecdote of miscegenation, a repetition, in a series of episodes and assertions, of that distinctive dynamic of proximity. And for Monboddo, as for Swift, the human pole in that leap of affinity, though sometimes specified as non-European or "negroe," is clearly grouped with Europeans rather than separated from them: "our" species and "our" females constitute the link with the ape. Building on Rousseau's argument about language and the status of the ape in his *Second Discourse*,[44] as well as on Tyson's *Anatomy of a Pygmie*, Monboddo constructs an exhaustive and comprehensive encyclopedia of the affinity of the human and the nonhuman being, structured throughout in terms of the same trajectory of surprise and inevitability that marks the miscegenation story. In the long course of Monboddo's account, evidence for the connection between apes and humans is raised to an insistence on their identity. Monboddo notes for instance that Tyson's dissection demonstrated, surprisingly, a similarity between the "small" orangutang's body, tongue, viscera, and brain and that of man, and he concludes that "for any thing we know, the great Orang Outang may be still more like men such as we" (272). Like the contemporary London displays and shows, Monboddo is preoccupied with images of apes dressed in human clothes

[44] Lovejoy sees Rousseau's *Second Discourse* (1753), note j, as directly influential on Monboddo. See Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, 235; and "Monboddo and Rousseau," *Modern Philology* 30 (1933): 275–276.

and performing human actions. He cites numerous instances of apes walking erect, wearing clothing, "play[ing] very well upon the pipe, harp, and other instruments," "performing domestic offices," and learning "to sit at table; to eat of every thing; to make use of the spoon, knife, and fork; and drink wine and other liquors," "and, when they were looked at, . . . conceal[ing] with their hand, those parts, which modesty forbids to shew" (275–279).

But beyond these concrete displays of resemblance, Monboddo is especially concerned to project a shared sensibility that provides an affective identity between orangutangs and humans. Orangutangs, he contends, have been observed to weep and groan (274); they are "sensible of their captivity, and appear . . . melancholy" (279); they have a "sense of honour," and "if they are laughed at, they take it so much to heart, that they languish and die" (287). Indeed, possessed of "a mildness and a gentleness in [their] nature," they are

> capable of the greatest affection, not only to [their] brother Orang Outangs, but to such among us as use him kindly. And it is a fact, well attested to me by a gentleman who was an eye-witness of it, that an Orang Outang, which was on board his ship, conceived such an affection for the cook, that when, upon some occasion, he left the ship, to go ashore, the gentleman saw the Orang Outang shed tears in great abundance. (343–345)

This story condenses contemporary ideas about the orangutang's "humane" disposition (289). And as such it serves as a sequel and counterpoint to the miscegenation story, a testimony to a surprising but natural intimacy, based, in this passage, on the nonhuman being's expression of that very affective identity that Monboddo takes to be constitutive of the human—a "great abundance" of tears. Affinity is balanced by distance even here, however, though the leap is a retrospective one: the affection of the ape and the cook is only evident upon their separation.

Monboddo takes note of the current debate about the biological classification of the orangutang in relation to the human—the hotly contested question of species—citing positions on both sides. That taxonomic question, however, is clearly subordinated to the concrete and visceral images and stories that enact the movement of proximity in Monboddo's text. Monboddo's essay, though it advances an abstract ontological point, adopts the vivid rhetoric and distinctive dynamic of the fable of the nonhuman being. And like other instances of this resonant fable, Monboddo's argument implicates the non-European human being in a direct analogy to the ape:

> If . . . the Orang Outang be not a man, then those philosophers of Europe, who, about the time of the discovery of America, maintained, that the inhabitants of that part of the world were not men, reasoned well; for, certainly, the Americans had not then, nor have they yet, learned all the arts of which their nature is capable. But I think the Pope, by his bull, decided the controversy well, when he gave it in favour of the humanity of the poor Americans: And for the same reason, we ought to decide, that the Orang Outangs are men. And, indeed, it appears to me, that they are not so much inferior to the Americans in civility and cultivation, as some nations of America were to us, when we first discovered that country. (347–348)

Here, as in Long's conclusion to the miscegenation story, the identity of the nonhuman being is inextricable from the contemporary encounter with cultural difference. And for Monboddo the conviction of the affinity of apes and humans is a matter of human dignity: he argues emphatically that we do not "disgrace our nature, as we imagine, by admitting the Orang Outang to a participation of it" (343). In fact, the denial of this participation amounts to "a false pride, to think highly derogatory from human nature, what the philosopher, on the contrary, will think the greatest praise of man, that, from the savage state, in which the Orang Outang lives, he should, by his own sagacity and industry, have arrived at the state in which we now see him" (360–361). This assertion comes at a summary point in Monboddo's second chapter on the orangutang, and, like Gulliver's claim that he "was a real yahoo," it serves as a statement of identification and identity. For Monboddo too, that leap of affinity from the human to the orangutang entails the claim to a particular human identity. Though Monboddo and Swift make opposite assessments of the implications of this identity—from secular optimism to Christian pessimism—both imagine human being by means of a difference from the non-European being, which they both construct in terms of the nonhuman.

III

In describing the names of substances and their divisions into sorts or species in the *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, Locke exemplifies his claim "that *men* make sorts of things," not nature, with a very familiar example:

> Nature makes many *particular things*, . . . But it is not this real essence that distinguishes them into species; it is men who . . .

> range them into sorts . . . for the convenience of comprehensive signs; under which individuals . . . come to be ranked . . . : this is a man, that is a drill [baboon]: and in this, I think, consists the whole business of genus and species. (bk. 3, chap. 6, §36)

Locke's image, unlike Monboddo's, assumes a separation between man and ape, but a separation, like Pope's, that derives its meaning from its allusion to the contemporary movement of proximity between the human and the nonhuman.

In the *Essay* that proximity is also developed in the representation of another member of the nonhuman cohort of this fable, the parrot. The parrot, as we have seen, is a major cultural locus of human attention and expense in the eighteenth century; and this creature is also a favorite nonhuman exemplum in the philosophical discourse of the period.[45] Locke uses the parrot to draw the distinction between "articulate sounds" and language—"signs of internal conceptions": "for parrots, and several other birds, will be taught to make articulate sounds distinct enough, which yet by no means are capable of language" (bk. 3, chap. 1, §1). Locke's implication, that language is a means of defining man, sets the terms for the complex debate on language which Monboddo later engages in his *Origin and Progress of Language* and which becomes, as Monboddo develops it, a debate about the status of the human. Monboddo's argument is that the orangutang resembles man in every respect except speech, and hence "that language is not natural to man" (358). But Locke's linking of language and man does not eliminate the possibility of a much nearer proximity between the animal and the human. In book 2 of the *Essay*, the nonhuman being appears as a "very intelligent rational parrot," and a means to the definition of a "*Man*":

> the *Idea* in our Minds, of which the Sound *Man* in our Mouths is the Sign, is nothing else but of an Animal of such a certain Form: Since I think I may be confident, that whoever should see a Creature of his own Shape and Make, though it had no more reason all its Life, than a *Cat* or a *Parrot*, would call him still a *Man*; or whoever should hear a *Cat* or a *Parrot* discourse, reason, and philosophize, would call or think it nothing but a *Cat* or a *Parrot*; and say,

[45] On the parrot's various connections with the contemplation of difference, in the figure of the non-European "savage," the woman, or the "defective being," especially as defined by the capacity for speech, see Felicity A. Nussbaum, "Speechless: Haywood's Deaf and Dumb Projector," in *The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood: Essays on Her Life and Work*, ed. Kirsten T. Saxton and Rebecca P. Bocchicchio (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2000), 194–216.

> the one was a dull irrational *Man*, and the other a very intelligent rational *Parrot*. (bk. 2, chap. 27, §8)[46]

"*Man*" acquires his identity as an animal "of a certain Form" by means of his simultaneous separation from and identification with the rational parrot, whose possible proximity to man as an "intelligent rational" being makes him the test case for human identity.

This argument is succeeded by a long anecdote extracted from the *Memoirs* of Sir William Temple about a particular nonhuman "Talker" (bk. 2, chap. 27, §8). Locke quotes Temple's account of his attempt to verify the story of this parrot:

> I had a mind to know from *Prince Maurice*'s own Mouth, the account of a common, but much credited Story, that I had heard so often from many others, of an old *Parrot* he had in *Brasil*, during his Government there, that spoke, and asked, and answered common Questions like a reasonable Creature . . . I had heard many particulars of this Story, and assevered by People hard to be discredited, which made me ask *Prince Maurice* what there was of it.

And next, Locke quotes Temple's quotation of Prince Maurice's story:

> He . . . told me short and coldly, that he had heard of such an old *Parrot* when he came to *Brasil*, and though he believed nothing of it, and 'twas a good way off, yet he had so much Curiosity as to send

[46] Locke's pairing of the cat with the parrot suggests that the issue of speech, mechanical or not, was less significant than the general sense of the growing intimacy between man and animal. After our cohort of monkeys, parrots, and lap dogs, the cat, another animal newly embraced in this period as a household pet, was an additional locus for the encounter with alterity. The most famous pets in the literary canon of this period are cats: Samuel Johnson's Hodge and Christopher Smart's Jeoffrey. Cats figure prominently not only in Smart's *Jubilate Agno* (1763) but also in Thomas Gray's *Ode on the Death of a Favourite Cat* (1738) and Anna Seward's *An Old Cat's Dying Soliloquy* (1784). Margaret Doody has argued that an intimacy with animals—cats and other species—is especially common among eighteenth-century women poets; "Sensuousness in the Poetry of Eighteenth-Century Women Poets," in *Women's Poetry in the Enlightenment: The Making of a Canon, 1730–1820*, ed. Isobel Armstrong and Virginia Blain (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 3–32. Johnson provides the non-European perspective on the imaginative status of the cat; describing the native Americans: "Johnson. 'Now what a wretch must he be, who is content with such conversation as can be had among savages! You may remember an officer at Fort Augustus, who had served in America, told us of a woman they were obliged to *bind*, in order to get her back from savage life.' Boswell. 'She must have been an animal, a beast.' Johnson. 'Sir, she was a speaking cat.' " James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. J. D. Fleeman, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1953), 912.

> for it, that 'twas a very great and a very old one; and when it came first into the Room where the Prince was, with a great many *Dutchmen* about him, it said presently, *What a company of white Men are here?* They asked it what he thought that Man was, pointing at the Prince? It answered, *Some General or other*; when they brought it close to him, he asked it, *D'ou venes vous?* it answered, *De Marinnan.* The Prince, *A qui estes vous?* The Parrot. *A un Portugais.* Prince, *Que fais tu la?* Parrot, *Je garde les poulles.* The Prince laughed and said, *Vous gardez les poulles?* The Parrot answered, *Ouy, moy et je scay bien faire*; and made the Chuck four or five times that People use to make to Chickens when they call them. I set down the Words of this worthy Dialogue in *French*, just as Prince *Maurice* said them to me. I asked him in what Language the *Parrot* spoke, and he said, in *Brasilian*; I asked whether he understood *Brasilian*; he said No, but he had taken care to have two Interpreters by him, the one a *Dutchman*, that spoke *Brasilian*, and the other a *Brasilian*, that spoke *Dutch*; that he asked them separately and privately, and both of them agreed in telling him just the same thing that the *Parrot* said.

Temple's summary deliberately leaves unanswered the question of the rational parrot:

> I could not but tell this odd Story, because it is so much out of the way, and from the first hand, and what may pass for a good one; for I dare say this Prince, at least, believed himself in all he told me, having ever passed for a very honest and pious Man; I leave it to Naturalists to reason, and to other Men to believe as they please upon it; however, it is not, perhaps, amiss to relieve or enliven a busie Scene sometimes with such digressions, whether to the purpose or no. (bk. 2, chap. 27, §8)

Locke's story reproduces a formal dynamic typical of the fable of the nonhuman being. This text places multiple impediments between the "rational parrot" and the incredulous contemporary human audience: both geographical distance and layers of language and narration. The parrot is "a good way off" from the Prince, to whom he must be transported, but this new world story itself is another "good way off" from the metropolitan locus of its telling. The Prince's account is twice retold by Temple and, then, by Locke, and the parrot's own language is twice or thrice translated: from "Brasilian" into Dutch, from Dutch into French, and finally from French into English, by Locke's English reader. But these impediments to the connection of parrot and human dissolve at the point of the

parrot's dialogue with the Prince, an event that produces that leap of affinity characteristic of this fable. Human and nonhuman suddenly make direct contact in this strange interspecies repartee, and even the Prince's own "short and cold" demeanor is through this contact transformed into a "laugh."

The nonhuman participant in this dynamic of proximity is linked to the non-European human in the same way that Monboddo's nonhuman reminds him of the "poor Americans." Here, the parrot's opening observation alludes to the cultural oppositions in his new world setting: "*What a company of white Men are here?*" In the Brasilian colonial state, the "white men"—French, Dutch, and Portuguese—are immediately singled out by the "rational" parrot, in contrast to a nonwhite group with which the parrot by this observation implicitly links himself. Although Locke's story is designed to demonstrate "the *Idea* of a *Man*" by separating the human from "an Animal of [a different] Form," namely the rational parrot, the dynamic of the story locates human identity through its proximity to that same animal—a nonhuman being whose status is shared by the non-European. Locke's use of Temple's anecdote demonstrates a conjunction of nonhuman and non-European that often accompanies the fable of the nonhuman being. And the anecdote demonstrates this conjunction at the same time as it shows our fable's deep implication in the constitution of a human identity. "Man" is conceived through the story of an animal that sees itself as a native.

The parrot makes other appearances in the philosophical discourse of the eighteenth century. Charles Bonnet in *The Contemplation of Nature* (1766) follows Locke's argument about the connection between language and man, but without entertaining the possibility raised in Locke's parrot story of a "very intelligent rational parrot." Bonnet argues that "to *speak*, is to connect our *ideas* with *arbitrary* signs that *represent* them. The phrases which the parrot repeats with so much exactness, do not prove that he has any ideas annexed to the words he pronounces: he could pronounce equally well the terms of the most abstracted sciences. Who does not see that this is an exercise purely automatical?"[47]

This heritage of the use of the parrot to define the problem of the human in British epistemological thought also accounts for David Hume's employment of the figure in his footnote to "Of National Characters" (1758) in the *Moral and Political Essays*, where the parrot is directly identified with the non-European in order to distinguish both from the European and the human:

[47] Charles Bonnet, in *The Contemplation of Nature* (1766), 2:182. Cited in Markman Ellis, *The Politics of Sensibility: Race, Gender and Commerce in the Sentimental Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 75.

> I am apt to suspect the negroes, and in general all other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civiliz'd nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufactures amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites, such as the ancient *Germans*, the present *Tartars*, have still something eminent about them, in their valour, form of government, or some other particular. Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen, in so many countries and ages, if nature had not made an original distinction between these breeds of men. Not to mention our colonies, there are *Negroe* slaves dispersed all over *Europe*, of whom none ever discovered any symptoms of ingenuity; tho' low people, without education, will start up amongst us, and distinguish themselves in every profession. In *Jamaica*, indeed, they talk of one negro, as a man of parts and learning; but 'tis likely he is admir'd for slender accomplishments, like a parrot who speaks a few words plainly.[48]

Hume's example of Francis Williams, the Cambridge educated mathematician, places Williams, like Locke's parrot, at a geographical and narrative distance from the European and the human, or in Hume's case the white "species" of men. Here again in this brief evocation of our fable, the nonhuman being is the ultimate test case for human identity, while the movement of proximity is condensed into the image of the speaking parrot with its evocation of that sudden affinity of human and animal.

But the parrot, or his feathered prototype, appears elsewhere in the print culture of the eighteenth century, linked as in the philosophical discourse with the contemporary encounter with the non-European. In this era of pet-keeping, feathered beings are a common metaphor for new world peoples. Pope's *Windsor Forest*, for example, alludes in its triumphant encomium to the *pax britannica* to the "Feather'd People" who will flock to the shores of the Thames:

> Then Ships of uncouth Form shall stem the Tyde,
> And Feather'd People crowd my wealthy Side,
> And naked Youths and painted Chiefs admire
> Our Speech, our colour, and our strange Attire!

[48] David Hume, "Of National Characters," in *Essays: Moral, Political and Literary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 213 n. 1. The essay was originally published in 1742; this note was added in 1758 and slightly revised in 1777.

The feathers link the feathered dress, conventionally associated with native Americans, with the exotic birds themselves, fashionable imports from the new world, whose presence as a subtext is felt subtly in the image of nesting in "native Groves" in the lines that follow:

> Oh stretch thy Reign, fair *Peace!* From Shore to Shore,
> Till Conquest cease, and Slav'ry be no more:
> Till the freed *Indians* in their native Groves
> Reap their own Fruits, and woo their Sable Loves.[49]

The image of "wooing" in the "native Groves" of the new world is another constituent of the trope of feathered people, more clearly evident in the later opera *Love in Mexico* (1790), where the Indian maiden Isagli describes her lover Alkmonoak through this same figure: "I would deck our wigwam for my love's approach with all the variegated plumage of our luxuriant Indian groves. It shou'd be my ozier cage, and my love, my Alkmonoak, my sweet bird—he should be my bird of paradise and convert my hut into a Heaven."[50]

This image of feathered non-Europeans appears elsewhere in the poetic discourse of the eighteenth century: Thomas Gray's *Progress of Poesy* (1757) sees the same blending of human and nonhuman in the forests of the new world:

> And oft, beneath the odorous shade
> Of Chile's boundless forests laid,
> She deigns to hear the savage youth repeat
> In loose numbers wildly sweet
> Their feather-cinctur'd chiefs and dusky loves.[51]

Such passages, though they do not develop the fable of the nonhuman being in its full dynamic form, indicate a ready exchangeability in contemporary culture, by which a familiar companion animal and a non-European human could be seen through the same imaginative lens.

In this context, another famous cage bird from the canonical literary culture of the period provides a fully elaborated representation of the fable of the nonhuman being: the starling of Laurence Sterne's *Sentimen-*

[49] Alexander Pope, *Windsor Forest* in *Poems of Alexander Pope*, vol. 1, ed. E. Audra and Aubrey Williams (London: Methuen, 1961), lines 403–412.

[50] *New Spain; or, Love in Mexico* (1790), 2.3. Cited in Benjamin Bissell, *The American Indian in English Literature of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1925), 140.

[51] Thomas Gray, "The Progress of Poetry," in *The Poems of Gray, Collins, and Goldsmith*, ed. Roger Lonsdale (New York: Longman, 1969), lines 58–62.

tal Journey (1768). Early in that novel, Yorick, fearful of the legal repercussions of his traveling to France without a passport, pauses in the midst of his own fantasy of imprisonment in the Bastille:

> I was interrupted in the hey-day of this soliloquy, with a voice which I took to be that of a child, which complained "it could not get out."—I looked up and down the passage [of the hotel], and seeing neither man, woman, nor child, I went out without further attention.
>
> In my return back through the passage, I heard the same words repeated twice over; and looking up, I saw it was a starling hung in a little cage.—"I can't get out—I can't get out," said the starling.[52]

Yorick's story here emphasizes that characteristic transition from distance to proximity that marks the fable of the nonhuman being. Yorick's musing state resembles Gulliver's soft descent to his bath in the stream; his going out upon hearing the "voice" describes a physical remove like that of the "rational parrot" from Prince Maurice; and this distance is answered by a surprising encounter with a speaker who is "neither man, woman, nor child," but who engages Yorick in a dialogue like that between Prince Maurice and the parrot:

> I stood looking at the bird: and to every person who came through the passage it ran fluttering to the side towards which they approached it, with the same lamentation of its captivity.—"I can't get out," said the starling——God help thee! said I, but I'll get thee out, cost what it will. (96)

It is at this point that Yorick makes the leap of affinity, internalizing the starling's experience and acting on his understanding of the starling's words with a sudden energy and force: "I turned about the cage to get to the door; it was twisted and double twisted so fast with wire, there was no getting it open without pulling the cage to pieces—I took both hands to it" (96).

Yorick's dialogue with the starling ends with his failure to liberate the bird: "I fear, poor creature! said I, I cannot set thee at liberty—'No,' said the starling—'I can't get out—I can't get out,' said the starling." Their exchange transcends identification and serves, for the human participant, as a test case for an assertion of identity:

[52] Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey Through France and Italy*, ed. Graham Petrie (London: Penguin, 1967), 96. Subsequent references are to this edition; page numbers are given within the text.

> I vow, I never had my affections more tenderly awakened; or do I remember an incident in my life, where the dissipated spirits, to which my reason had been a bubble, were so suddenly called home. Mechanical as the notes were, yet so true in tune to nature were they chanted, that in one moment they overthrew all my systematic reasonings upon the Bastile; and I heavily walked upstairs, unsaying every word I had said in going down them.
>
> Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still slavery! said I—still thou art a bitter draught. (96)[53]

Yorick's own prospective imprisonment in the Bastille has prepared him for the analogy with the caged starling, but his intensely experienced contact with the bird far exceeds such an identification—so far that he even repudiates his previous concern with his own fate to privilege the starling's plight. So powerful is the movement of proximity in Yorick's contact with the bird that Sterne can deliberately raise and directly supercede the debate over animal language that provides the contemporary context for the nonhuman "Talker" in its other redactions. This passage, in its evocation of the "mechanical" notes of the starling, echoes Bonnet's assertion of the "purely automatical" speech of the parrot. But that allusion is broached only to be set aside: "yet" and "in one moment" all that matters is that overwhelming proximity, which propels its audience into a direct and unquestioned relationship with alterity. That leap of affinity with the nonhuman expresses Yorick's consciousness of the "soul" within himself (137), those "affections" and "undescribable emotions" (137–138) that make him a man of feeling. And significantly, the nonhuman agent that generates Yorick's sentimental identity in this passage is ultimately figured as non-European. The imprisonment of the starling is a "disguise" for the institution of slavery, and the bird itself, in this last phase of the fable's dynamic unfolding, is an African slave in the new world. Both the turn to the constitution of identity and the implication of the non-European characterize the structure of the fable of the nonhuman being, as it projects the encounter with the nonhuman being upon the contempo-

[53] Many critics have taken up Sterne's image of the starling. Wilbur L. Cross described it as an observation upon slavery; see *The Life and Times of Laurence Sterne*, 3d ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929), 3. Jonathan Lamb sees the figure as symptomatic of the sentimental conjuncture of pleasure and pain; see "Language and Hartleian Associationism in *A Sentimental Journey*," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 13 (1980): 285–312. In his edition of the *Sentimental Journey*, Gardner Stout calls attention in his annotation to this passage to the allusion of the starling to Sterne's family name; see 197 n. 66. And Michael Seidel sees it as an allusion to Crusoe's parrot; see *Exile and the Narrative Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 115. Ellis takes up a theme similar to my own; he sees Sterne's starling as an allusion to Hume's parrot (74).

rary problem of cultural difference with all of its implication in power and exploitation.

IV

When the fable of the nonhuman being is centered upon the life and fate of the lap dog, the non-European figure that we have seen variously shadowed in this imaginative venture of affinity consistently takes the shape of the African slave. An early emblematic passage in Sarah Scott's sentimental novel, *The History of Sir George Ellison* (1766), makes this connection of nonhuman and non-European explicit. In the opening pages of the novel, Sir George makes his fortune in trade in Jamaica and marries a widow who brings him "a considerable plantation, cultivated by a numerous race of slaves."[54] Opposed to the institution of slavery, but "sensible he could not abolish [it], even on his own estate" (10), Ellison, like Savillon in Mackenzie's *Julia de Roubigné*, undertakes to reform the treatment of his own slaves, much against his wife's wishes and sentiments. Mrs. Ellison "was above those soft timorous whims which so much affected him; . . . and never flinched at any punishment her steward thought proper to inflict" (12).

This discussion between Ellison and his wife, conducted in the abstract mode typical of this didactic narrative, is suddenly interrupted by the anomalous appearance of Mrs. Ellison's lap dog, which evokes an effusion of that very sentiment its owner has pointedly denied to her slaves:

> She was turning the conversation to another subject, when a favourite lap-dog, seeing her approach the house, in its eagerness to meet her jumped out of the window where it was standing; the height was too great to permit the poor cur to give this mark of affection with impunity; they soon perceived that it had broken its leg, and was in a good deal of pain; this drew a shower of tears from Mrs. Ellison's eyes, who, turning to her husband, said, "You will laugh at me for my weakness; but I cannot help it." (13)

The distance, the surprise, the sudden "eagerness," the tears, and the "natural" or inevitable nature of Mrs. Ellison's connection with the dog, all follow the formal structure of the fable of the nonhuman being. Here Mrs. Ellison

[54] Sarah Scott, *The History of Sir George Ellison*, ed. Betty Rizzo (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 10. Subsequent references are to this edition; page numbers are given within the text.

occupies the place of Yorick, the man of feeling, whose very nature is constituted by his leap of affinity with the nonhuman, or of Gulliver, who acknowledges, when the female Yahoo leaps from the bank into his embrace "that I was a real yahoo in every limb and feature." This emblematic scene both thematizes that movement that joins human to nonhuman—as the nonhuman leaps into the human embrace—and also directly implicates the link to the non-European that we have seen to be a persistent dimension of the imaginative experience of alterity. Ellison's response to his wife reflects on the relation between the African slave and the nonhuman being:

> "My dear," replied Mr. Ellison, "you will one day know me better than to think I can laugh at any one for a token of sensibility; to see any creature suffer is an affecting sight; and it gives me pleasure to observe you can feel for the poor little animal, whose love for you occasioned his accident; but I confess I am surprised, though agreeably, to see such marks of sensibility in a heart I feared was hardened against the sufferings even of her fellow creatures." (13)[55]

In this passage, the lap dog's leap into affinity generates the same debate about species as the miscegenation story, and the same constitution of identity. Long finds that apes and Africans are "nearly allied"; Gulliver cannot deny that he is of the same species as the Yahoo; and Mrs. Ellison's proximity to the lap dog indicates, in the context of this redaction of the fable of the nonhuman being, an equivalent proximity to the Africans who are her slaves—a proximity that she must be at pains, ineffectually, to deny: "Sure, Mr. Ellison, you do not call negroes my fellow creatures?" Ellison's response provides a definition of the human and an assertion of identity that serves as the climax of this anecdote, a climax characteristic of the fable of the nonhuman being: "Indeed, my dear, . . . I must call them so, till you can prove to me, that the distinguishing marks of humanity lie in the complexion or turn of features. When you and I are laid in the grave, our lowest black slave will be as great as we are; in the next world perhaps much greater" (13).[56]

Mrs. Ellison's affection for her lap dog refers to a satiric theme of misogynist writing in the eighteenth century—that of the intimacy of the lap dog and the woman of fashion. Pope's "Men, Monkies, Lap-Dogs, Parrots, perish all" evokes this theme in its suggestion that the perverse values

[55] Ellis, in a close reading of this passage, argues that "the reader is invited to read the lap-dog as a metaphor for the slaves" (98), and, relatedly, that Scott's lap-dog "has a structural affinity with the . . . starling in Sterne's *A Sentimental Journey*" (96).

[56] Wheeler cites this line as a key indication that even as late as 1766 skin color was not necessarily held to determine human value (146).

of the social world of Pope's poem are aligned to a specifically female sensibility for which, as for Mrs. Ellison, lap dogs have a privileged place. Indeed, these particular canine nonhumans were represented as participating in the private lives of their mistresses with an intimacy that was clearly sexual, as when Belinda's lap dog "wakes his Mistress with his Tongue" (1.116). Jonas Hanway, in his "Remarks on Lap-dogs" (1756), specifically links women with the problematic of human proximity with the nonhuman:

> I think a woman of sense may entertain a certain DEGREE of affection for a BRUTE; I do not mean a HUMAN brute, but a DOG, for instance, which is a faithful animal, and preferable to a monkey, because a dog has no vile resemblance to the human species, as monkeys have. Most dogs are SYCOPHANTS, but they are FAITHFUL, which is more than can be said for the generality of parasites of our species. . . .
>
> But alas! the BEST things may be abused, all the kind intentions of providence perverted! Thus we may sometimes see a fine lady, act as if she thought the DOG, which happens to be under her proper care, is incomparably of more value, in her eyes, than a HUMAN creature, which is under the care of any other person, or peradventure, under no care at all. From hence we may conclude, that an immoderate love of a brute animal, tho' it may not destroy a charitable disposition, yet it often weakens the force of it.[57]

In fact, in suggesting alternative affinities for the "fine lady"—either monkey or lap dog—Hanway's comments illustrate the imaginative connections among the nonhuman cohort that shapes this contemporary negotiation with difference, a negotiation that also readily leaps beyond the bounds of species to embrace differences of culture and of gender.

The lap dog, with his peculiar connection to the woman of quality, is the protagonist of Francis Coventry's popular midcentury satiric novel *Pompey the Little* (1751). This picaresque circulation novel[58] uses the ca-

[57] Jonas Hanway, *A Journal of Eight Days Journey*, containing "Remarks on Lap-dogs," (London, 1756), 69–70. Cited in Ellis, 97.

[58] Such works, like John Phillips's poem *The Splendid Shilling* (1705), Joseph Addison's autobiography of a shilling in *Tatler*, no. 249 (11 November 1710), or Charles Johnstone's *Chrysal; or the Adventures of a Guinea* (1760–1765) represent the movement of an object or, in Pompey's case, an objectified being through an economic circuit or change of hands. See Christopher Flint, "Speaking Objects: The Circulation of Stories in Eighteenth-Century Prose Fiction," *PMLA* 113 (1998): 212–226.

nine pet, "little *Pompey*,"[59] as a means of moving from one social site to another, and thereby generating a series of set satiric scenes. Pompey, born into the home of a "celebrated Courtesan" of Bologna (7), is taken to England by a fashionable gentleman on his return from the grand tour, and thence passes through the houses of the vain Lady Tempest, a social-climbing City family, an "ancient Virgin" (50), a Captain of the guards, an enthusiastic female Methodist, an inn keeper, a blind beggar, a pair of polite and good natured sisters, a prosperous widow milliner, a great Lord, a penniless poet, the vaporous Mrs. Qualmsick, a Cambridge scholar, yet another fashionable Lady, and finally back—in a framing move that emphasizes the connection to the female figure—into the hands of Lady Tempest. As the protagonist of a full-length novel, taking the place of the human hero, the pet Pompey condenses the contemporary interest in the status of the nonhuman. And in the course of his adventures, the lap dog provides various perspectives on the fable of the nonhuman being; in fact, the novel could be seen as an encyclopedia of the redactions of the themes of this cultural fable.

The novel displays at length the intimacy between this particular nonhuman being and the woman of fashion, first through the summary account of Pompey's life with Lady Tempest:

> Lady *Tempest* . . . soon ushered him into all the Joys of the Town. He quickly became a great Admirer of Mr. *Garrick*'s acting at the Playhouse, grew extremely fond of Masquerades, passed his Judgment on Operas, and was allowed to have a very nice and distinguishing Ear for *Italian* Music. . . . he attended his Mistress to all Routs, Drums, Hurricanes, Hurly-burlys and Earthquakes, . . . and was extremely proud to shew *his collar at Court.* (30)

This theme is engaged again, with more explicit sexual innuendo, in the account of Pompey's intimacy with another mistress, the fashionable Aurora, with whom

> he was a great favourite. . . . *Aurora* . . . caressed him with the fondest tenderness, and permitted him to sleep every night in a chair by her bed-side. When she awoke in a morning, she would embrace him with an ardour, which the happiest lover might have envied. (132)

[59] Francis Coventry, *The History of Pompey the Little or the Life and Adventures of a Lap-Dog* (1751), ed. Robert Adams Day (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 10. Subsequent references are to this edition; page numbers are given within the text.

Coventry also uses his nonhuman "Hero" (17) as a means of reflecting on contemporary assumptions about "learned" animals. Pompey demonstrates a "Sagacity" that ascends to ridiculous heights of proximity. In the opening "Panegyric upon Dogs" of the first chapter, the author informs us of "the Capacity they have often discovered, for playing at Cards, Fiddling, Dancing, and other polite Accomplishments" (2). And Pompey masters these accomplishments early in his career, when Lady Tempest cultivates the lap dog's talents as a partner at cards:

> As to his own Part, his Lady was at the Expence of a Master, perhaps the great Mr. *H——le*, to teach him to play at Cards; and so forward was his Genius, that in less than three Months he was able to sit down with her Ladyship to Piquet, whenever Sickness or the Vapours confined her to her Chamber. (31)

Even the question of language, usually evoked in the appearance of the talking bird, is suggested in the claim the narrator makes, in the course of this same opening "Panegyric," that he has "heard of a Dog's making a Syllogism; which cannot fail to endear him to our two famous Universities, where his Brother-Logicians are so honoured and distinguished for their Skill at that *useful* Science" (2). Local satire, like this against the university, is the main effect of *Pompey the Little*, where, as in contemporary satiric verse, the dog is used simply to demonstrate the deficiency of the human target. Pope's well known epigram, "Engraved on the collar of a Dog which I gave to his Royal Highness," illustrates this specifically satiric use of the canine species:

> I AM his Highness Dog at Kew;
> Pray tell me Sir, whose Dog are you?[60]

But the lap dog's presence in this text has a larger purchase on the imagination than those local satiric effects would suggest. Pompey calls up the various dimensions of the experience of alterity figured through the nonhuman cohort of our fable, and projects that experience directly into the realm of the non-European. For instance, in the course of Pompey's peregrinations, Coventry provides a sample disquisition on the debate about species. In his attendance upon Lady Tempest, Pompey witnesses a "curious Dispute on the Immortality of the Soul"

[60] Alexander Pope, [Epigram], in *Eighteenth-Century English Literature*, ed. Geoffrey Tillotson, Paul Fussell Jr., and Marshall Waingrow (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969), 681.

between Lady *Sophister* and two physicians. Their argument specifically addresses the relation of men to animals, and ultimately focuses on the lap dog himself, whom Lady Sophister points out as an apt and immediate example of her claim for the proximity of the human and the nonhuman:

> "the *Indians* you know believe their dogs will bear them company to heaven. . . . For instance now, there's lady *Tempest*'s little lap-dog"—
> —"My dear little creature," said lady *Tempest*, catching him up in her arms, "will you go to heaven along with me? I shall be vastly glad of your company, *Pompey*, if you will." (39)

Here Lady Tempest's embrace signifies that intimacy between the woman of quality and the lap dog that shapes the plot as well as many of the specific satiric effects of this novel. But that connection is also an emblem of the larger problematic of difference in which the species debate and the fable of the nonhuman being participate.

The same topic, the relation of men to animals, is taken up at the end of this text, in the debate in the Monday night authors club held in "a little dirty dog-hole of a tavern in *Shire-lane*" (169). There Pompey and his current master, the poet Mr. *Rhymer*, meet "a free-thinking writer of moral essays, a *Scotch* translator of *Greek* and *Latin* authors, a *Grub-street* bookseller, and a *Fleet* parson" (169). The human discussion that follows has a nonhuman analogue, represented in the participants' canine pets:

> By odd luck, every one of these great advancers of modern literature, happened to have a dog attending him; and as the gentlemen drew round the fire after supper in a ring, the dogs likewise made an interior semi-circle, sitting between the legs of their respective masters. (169)

This human/nonhuman colloquium, drawn in a manner to exaggerate its polarities, takes a very familiar tack:

> "Why this is my paradox, sir," replied the free-thinker; "I undertake to prove that brutes think and have intellectual faculties. That perhaps you'll say is no novelty, because many others have asserted the same thing before me; but I go farther sir, and maintain that they are reasonable creatures, and moral agents."
>
> "And I will maintain that they are mere machines," cries the par-

> son. . . . "Sir, you may be ashamed to prostitute the noble faculty of reason to the beasts of the field."
>
> . . .
>
> [the free thinker says] "but I will maintain that brutes are capable of reason, and they have given manifest proofs of it. Did you never hear of Mr. *Locke*'s parrot, sir, that held a very rational conversation with prince *Maurice* for half an hour together? what say you to that, sir?" (171)

The circled dogs serve as either a mockery or a mimicry of the claim to nonhuman rationality. On one hand, as satire, this passage seems to expose the excesses of the position of affinity; the dogs depicted in the absurd role of rational disputants make such a claim to a human-like faculty ridiculous. But, on the other hand, this scene, like the novel as a whole, testifies to and participates in the attraction of the dynamic of affinity, with its allusion to the authority of "Mr. *Locke*" and the "intelligent rational parrot," and with its vivid image of the conferring dogs, whose critique of proximity entails a performance of it. Even as a satiric indication of the human disputants' failure of rationality, the dogs still sit in a human place.

This complex play with the contemporary figure of the nonhuman is matched in *Pompey the Little* by an insistent, pervasive, and wholly implicit analogy between the lap dog and the African slave. The dog's name comes from contemporary slave-naming convention, where Pompey, Caesar, and other imperial names were an ironic commonplace. In the first pages of the novel, we learn that "Master *Pompey*" is presented "with a Collar studded with Diamonds" (9), a material link between slavery and dog fancy. In the eighteenth century, such elaborate collars were made interchangeably for Africans and for dogs, and sold in the same shops. F. O. Shyllon supplies a vivid context:

> That a collar was considered as essential for a black slave as for a dog is clear from *The London Advertiser* for 1756, in which Matthew Dyer, working goldsmith, at the Crown in Duck Lane, Orchard Street, Westminster, intimates to the public that he makes "silver padlocks for Blacks or Dogs; collars, &c". In *The London Gazette* of March 1685 a reward was advertised for bringing back John White, a black boy of about fifteen years of age, who had run away from Colonel Kirke's. He had a silver collar about his neck, upon which were the Colonel's coat-of-arms and cipher. And in *The Daily Journal* of 28 September 1728 is an advertisement for a runaway black boy, who had the legend, "My Lady

> Bromfield's black, in Lincoln's Inn Fields", engraved on a collar round his neck.[61]

We can trace the connection between slaves and pets still further in this text. When Lady Tempest loses Pompey in St. James's Park, she places an advertisement for his return in the London papers. This appeal runs for a month:

> *Lost in the* Mall *in* St. James's Park, *between the Hours of Two and Three* in the Morning, *a beautiful* Bologna *Lap-dog, with black and white Spots, a mottled Breast, and several Moles upon his Nose, and answers to the Name of* Pomp, *or* Pompey. *Whoever will bring the same to Mrs.* La Place *'s, in* Duke-street, Westminster, *or Mrs.* Hussy *'s, Mantua-maker in the* Strand, *or to* St. James *'s Coffee-house, shall receive two Guineas Reward.* (43)

Lady Tempest's advertisement is directly modeled upon the increasingly frequent notices for the return of runaway slaves, in which the physical description, including color, the naming of distinctive features, and the specification of a monetary reward—often of "Two Guineas"—were standard components:

> RUN AWAY, From Captain STUBBS. A Yellowish Negro Man, about Five Feet Seven Inches, very flat Nose, and a Scar across his Forehead, he had when he run away, a white Pea-Jacket, a Pair of black Worsted Breeches and Stockings, and a black Wig. Whoever will bring the said Negro Man to his abovementioned Master, Capt. STUBBS, in Prince's Square, Ratcliff Highway, shall receive Two Guineas Reward.[62]

In the first half of the novel, Pompey is passed from one aristocratic household to another in the same way that young Africans were often exchanged. Shyllon describes this situation, as well:

> That having small black boys was popular among Duchesses and Countesses of the period can be seen from a letter which the

[61] F. O. Shyllon, *Black Slaves in Britain* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 9. Aravamudan also describes the contemporary pet/slave analogy (33–49). And David Dabydeen documents the frequent parallels represented between Africans and canine pets in the visual art of the period. See *Hogarth's Blacks: Images of Blacks in Eighteenth Century British Art* (Surrey: Dangaroo Press, 1985), 26–30.

[62] From a plate taken from a page from the *Public Advertiser* (British Museum); cited in Shyllon, facing 116.

> Duchess of Devonshire wrote to her mother towards the end of the eighteenth century:
>
> Dear Mama, George Hanger has sent me a Black boy, eleven years old and honest, but the Duke don't like me having a black . . . if you liked him instead of Michel I will send him, he will be a cheap servant and you will make a Christian of him and a good boy; if you don't like him they say Lady Rockingham wants one." (12)

In *Pompey the Little* the canine pet is the unacknowledged counterpart of the African slave. The imaginative status of both pet and African is thrown into relief by this analogy. The cultural currency of pethood—its import and efficacy in contemporary experience—is evidenced in this conjunction of the idea of the pet with the historical events that accompany European global expansion—the exploitation of cultural difference through the institutionalization of new world slavery. And the African in turn is strangely reconstituted through the European intimacy with the nonhuman. Figured as nonhuman beings within the dynamic of proximity that structures this cultural fable, non-Europeans are both radically alien and also intimately connected with the European human beings who find their own identity through this paradoxical movement.

V

Animals helped Europeans imagine Africans, Native Americans, and themselves. The many figurative lines of connection between our cohort of nonhuman beings and the non-European human beings who had become vividly present to European experience in the eighteenth century suggest that the fable of the nonhuman being served as a powerful and common resource for structuring the encounter with cultural difference. This fable repeatedly raises questions about the nature of the human, just as it also repeatedly implicates itself with the unprecedented forms of "ruthless exploitation" that mark modern Europe's engagement with the peoples of the globe. In the imaginative world of our fable, each of these themes constitutes the other. To ask, "What have we here, a man or a fish?" is to confront the subjugation of one human being by another, and to recognize the historical forces that accompany that subjugation. To assert that "I could no longer deny that I was a real Yahoo" is to lay claim to an identity defined in terms of the exploitation central to those modern forces. The fable of the nonhuman being gives the problem of the human a specific historical location and significance—in the eighteenth century and in the imaginative encounter with the expansive promises and the unprecedented exploitations of modernity.

Very often, in these several redactions of our fable, that problem is resolved in favor of a narrowing, a containing, an exclusion, or a prescription, as in Long's racialist distinction between "black men" and Europeans, Hume's claim that "negroes" are "naturally inferior," or Coventry's and Scott's satires on the fashionable woman's affection for her pets. Indeed, like our fable, other modern attempts at an engagement with the nonhuman find their way back to an ideological project consolidating a particular sort of human identity, and thus provide a foregone conclusion to their story of the encounter with alterity.[63]

Donna Haraway's reading of the history of primatology largely supports this structure of appropriation and retrenchment. Haraway sees twentieth-century primatology as "simian orientalism":

> western primatology has been about the construction of the self from the raw material of the other, the appropriation of nature in the production of culture, the ripening of the human from the soil of the animal, the clarity of white from the obscurity of color, the issue of man from the body of woman, the elaboration of gender from the resource of sex, the emergence of mind by the activation of body. To effect these transformative operations, simian "orientalist" discourse must first construct the terms: animal, nature, body, primitive, female. Traditionally associated with lewd meanings, sexual lust, and the unrestrained body, monkeys and apes mirror humans in a complex play of distortions over centuries of western commentary on these troubling doubles.[64]

Perhaps the clearest—certainly the most straightforward—conclusion we can draw from our reading of the fable of the nonhuman being is about our own need to see ourselves in the beings around us, to use those beings to our ends. But Haraway's position itself seems to license something else. She writes about primates, she claims, because "all members of the Primate Order—monkeys, apes, and people—are threatened" (3). Her motive mirrors Pope's joining of the human and nonhuman in his image of the encounter with an ultimate, leveling dissolution: "Men, Monkies, Lap-dogs, Parrots, perish all." In this context Haraway self-consciously represents her role as that of a collaborator with the nonhu-

[63] Recent discussions of anthropomorphism, in various fields, exemplify such conclusions. See John S. Kennedy, *The New Anthropomorphism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); or Mary Midgley, *Beast and Man: The Roots of Human Nature*, 1978; rev. ed. (London: Routledge, 1995).

[64] Donna Haraway, *Primate Visions: Gender, Race, and Nature in the World of Modern Science* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 11.

man, because "primates . . . are wonderful subjects with whom to explore the permeability of walls, the reconstitution of boundaries, the distaste for endlessly socially enforced dualisms" (3).

But Haraway's exploration leaves the main question open. One image, for instance, central to Haraway's account of "Rehabilitants and Surrogates: Modeling Social Problems after World War II," echoes one of the central tropes of our eighteenth-century fable, the interspecies embrace. Haraway describes how the intimacy of humans and apes in the rehabilitation projects of the mid twentieth century, "where white women teach captive apes to 'return' to the 'wild' " (2), exceeds the numerous accommodations of "gender, decolonization, class, race, and other large historical constructions" that inevitably circumscribe such projects:

> the emotional complexity of the relationships among women and chimpanzees in these stories of exile and rehabilitation is stunning. The forms of love and knowledge in these narratives are rich, often wrenchingly painful, and far from innocent extensions of the possibilities of animal-human contact imagined and enacted within western culture in the Third World. The narratives tell of profound loss and also of major achievements—by people and by animals. The people and the animals in these stories are *actors* enmeshed in history, not simply objects of knowledge, observers, or victims. The 1986 photograph of Janis Carter in an embrace with Lucy, then an adult rehabilitant in The Gambia after nine years, captures part of the tone of these narratives of relationship. (129–130)

This powerful image of contact, which Haraway reproduces on a full page, shows a chimpanzee and a woman in an intimate embrace. Seated partly facing one another in the underbrush, with a leafy jungle in the background, their arms are wound around each another; the animal's hand is visible at the human's waist as it circles behind her back, as is the woman's as it appears from behind the animal's shoulder; the human's cheek rests on the back of the animal's head, and the animal's face fits against the human's neck.[65] Is this simian orientalism, or something else, for which Haraway has no name?

Our fable, too, often leaves its central question—the limits of the human—unanswered. The bathing scene of *Gulliver's Travels* throws into mutual suspension the status of human, animal, man, and woman alike. Monboddo's approach to the question, "*What is man?*" (313) through an

[65] Figure 6.1. "Janis Carter and Lucy embrace on Baboon Island in the River Gambia in 1986, a year before Lucy's death."

extended gesture of affinity with the orangutang denies the conventional boundaries of the human. And the vividly realized encounter of human and nonhuman elaborated in the story of Prince Maurice's parrot far exceeds the requirements of Locke's argument that the idea "*Man*" is "nothing else but of an Animal of such a certain Form": the parrot's conversation with Prince Maurice defies the primary distinction between human and animal, that of reason.

In his account of "The Family Pet," Marc Shell describes what it might mean to deny these boundaries, defy these dualisms, and to leave open the question of the human:

> The tendency to erase—and, if you want, also to rise above—the ordinary distinction between human and animal beings suggests the first potentially disturbing question raised not only by the ordinary definition of *pet* but also by the institution of pethood itself. Another way to put the same question is, "what is a human being?"
>
> . . . .
>
> Family pets are generally mythological beings on the line between human kind and animal kind, or beings thought of as being on the line between. Yet sometimes we *really* cannot tell whether a being is essentially human or animal—say when we were children, or when we shall become extraterrestrial explorers. Sometimes we really cannot tell whether a being is our kind or not our kind, our kin or not our kin; we cannot tell what we are and to whom. If there were no such beings as pets, we would breed them, for ourselves, in the imagination.[66]

We did breed them, in the eighteenth century. And the cultural fable they generate enables us to imagine an open possibility: if we *really* cannot tell "whether a being is our kind, or not our kind," then we might refuse the "ordinary" exercise of distinction, we might see something else in alterity, and we might understand "what we are and to whom" in a new way. This surprising leap is the positive promise of modernity, a promise tied as closely to its "ruthless exploitation" as the Negro woman to the orangutang, the parrot to the colonial aristocrat, or the lap dog to the frivolous lady of fashion..

[66] Marc Shell, "The Family Pet," *Representations* 15 (1986); 121–153; these quotes, 123, 142.